



PRESS RELEASE

House National Security Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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HOUSE VOTES TO BALANCE DEFENSE PRIORITIES

*Today, the House endorsed the National Security Committee's effort to restore balance in the Administration's defense priorities by passing H.R. 1119, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998, on a strong bipartisan 304 to 120 vote – **the highest vote tally in the House since 1984**. Upon final passage, Chairman of the House National Security Committee Floyd Spence, issued the following statement:*

"I am pleased that a bipartisan majority of the House has endorsed the National Security Committee's approach to managing national security risks and balancing America's defense priorities.

"H.R. 1119 reflects the committee's deepening concerns about the risks posed by continued force downsizing and budget reductions. The fundamental dilemma facing the Department of Defense remains the same: how to maintain a viable all-volunteer force in an environment where the number, scope and duration of military missions, especially peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, continue to grow while military forces and defense budgets continue to decline.

"As in the past, H.R. 1119 reflects the House's effort to address those concerns and to maintain our long-standing commitment to expanding quality of life initiatives, addressing readiness shortfalls, enhancing modernization programs, and enacting common sense reforms."

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H.R. 1119 provides \$268.2 billion in budget authority for Department of Defense and Energy programs for fiscal year 1998, an increase of \$2.6 billion over the President's request and consistent with the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget. The bill provides \$3.3 billion more than current fiscal year 1997 spending, which, when adjusted for inflation, represents a real decline in spending of 1.3 percent. Highlights of H.R. 1119 include:

Sustaining readiness of U.S. combat forces by:

- safeguarding the resources and training required to maintain a high level of military preparedness.
- adding over \$740 million to underfunded key readiness accounts.

Enhancing the quality of life for troops & their families by:

- providing a 2.8 percent military pay raise.
- reducing out of pocket expenses for service members and their families.
- restoring health care funding and benefits for military service members and their families.
- adding over \$470 million for construction and renovations of family and troop housing.

Providing for adequate modernization by:

- funding underbudgeted modernization programs, consistent with the unfunded priorities of the military service chiefs.
- developing effective theater and national missile defense systems to protect American lives at home and abroad.
- funding advanced technology programs to ensure U.S. superiority on tomorrow's battlefields.

Implements real defense reform by:

- downsizing oversized Pentagon bureaucracy and compelling more efficient defense business practices.
- saving taxpayers an estimated \$15.5 billion dollars over 5 years, according to CBO.

*A summary of major provisions may be obtained through the House National Security Committee
Homepage: www.house.gov/nsc/.*